Experimental Social Science Laboratory
Policies and Procedures

General Information

The Experimental Social Science Laboratory (ESSL) is a computer laboratory for the experimental study of individual and interactive decision making. Located at SBSG 1240, the laboratory can conduct computer-based experiments of up to 40 subjects, but ESSL also has capabilities to conduct internet-based or in-classroom experiments. ESSL maintains its own subject pool. ESSL is available for use by researchers of all disciplines. ESSL may also be used for teaching purposes, with permission from the ESSL Director, subject to availability.

A "Typical" Experiment

ESSL primarily supports experiments that follow the standard procedures of experimental economics. A "typical" experiment has the following seven features:

1. Subjects are drawn from the *ESSL subject pool*.

2. Subjects receive *instructions* at the start of the experiment and during the experiment as needed.

3. Each subject receives *a monetary payment of at least $7*. Normally, the subject receives a fixed show-up payment of $7 and earns additional payments that depend on decisions made during the experiment. Payments are made at the conclusion of the experiment. Subjects that show-up on time but are turned away are to receive the $7 payment.

4. The experiment lasts *90 minutes or less*, unless notified otherwise.

5. The subjects incur *no anticipated risks or costs* and no benefits other than the monetary payment.

6. The experiment involves *no deception*. Deception is the deliberate misinforming of subjects and is to be distinguished from incomplete information, which involves no misinformation.

7. Research data are *anonymous* and kept separate from ESSL accounting data.

8. Subjects are *not photographed, filmed, or otherwise recorded*. Only their decisions are recorded.

Usage Policies

All users of ESSL must agree to the following policies. Violation of one or more of these rules will result in suspension of access to ESSL.

1. Permission. Prior to conducting a research study using ESSL, the user must submit an experimental protocol explaining their research aims and experimental design to the ESSL Director for scientific review (emailed to mcbride@uci.edu please cc essl@uci.edu). This protocol, normally 1-2 pages, must also explain whether or not the experiment qualifies under the above definition of "typical." The ESSL Director has the right to decline approval for any project that lacks scientific merit, that may adversely impact the use of ESSL by other users, or that does not conform to standard methods of experimental economics.

2. Institutional Review Board. A UCI-affiliated researcher (faculty or student) on the currently-approved ESSL IRB protocol narrative may operate under that IRB approval if the project qualifies as "typical" as defined above. A non-UCI researcher whose project qualifies as "typical" must obtain IRB approval from her home institution. Experiments that do not qualify as "typical" are normally not conducted at ESSL. If the ESSL Director approves a "non-typical" experiment, then that user must obtain IRB approval from her own institution.

3. Scheduling. Scheduling of ESSL facilities for software testing and experiment sessions is to be done through the ESSL Research Coordinator (lmdelgad@uci.edu).

4. Limited use. Use of ESSL is restricted to no more than six hours per week. Exceptions may be granted by the ESSL Director. Priority will be given to UCI faculty and student researchers over non-UCI users. Non-UCI users cannot reserve time more than two weeks prior to the time of the session for which the reservation is made.

5. Software. ESSL users are ultimately responsible for the creation, testing, and implementation of experimental software. Past experiments have used the zTree and Multistage software packages. ESSL users may request to have the ESSL programmer create a zTree program. Requests must be approved by the ESSL Director, after which they are placed in a programming queue. The ESSL Director reserves the right to deny the request or to move a request to the front of the queue. Some past users have asked graduate students for assistance in creating experimental software. The terms and outcome of that assistance are between the experimenter and the graduate student and do not involve ESSL.

6. Staff oversight. The ESSL Research Coordinator must be present in the lab during any experiment conducted in ESSL.

7. Screening. An experiment that will screen subjects for participation by sex, race, or some other characteristic is not "typical" and will require separate IRB approval.

8. Cancellation. Cancelling a scheduled session for which there has already been sign-ups must be done early enough to provide the subjects at least 24 hours notice before the session's scheduled start time. Otherwise, subjects that show up on time must receive the show-up payment. Please email the ESSL Research Coordinator for all cancellations (lmdelgad@uci.edu).

9. Completion of informed consent process. The ESSL user must complete the fourth and final step of the informed consent process by reminding the subjects at the start of an experiment session that their participation is voluntary. The first three steps are at registration in the subject pool, at receipt of email notifications, and at signing-up for an experiment session. Signed consent forms are not required.

10. Additional informed consent. If an ESSL user must obtain informed consent beyond the normal process (e.g., subjects must sign a form), then this additional consent documentation must be approved by the ESSL Director, with blank copies of consent documentation provided for ESSL records.

11. Questionnaires. A questionnaire may be used, normally at the end of the experiments. A "typical" questionnaire does not ask for personal identifying information.

12. Payments. All ESSL payments must be made electronically via Venmo, Zelle, or PayPal. ESSL users should be able to accommodate all three forms of payment to subjects.

13. Payment signature. Subjects must complete and sign the ESSL payment signature form after completion of a study. These signatures are kept on file by ESSL for accounting purposes.

14. ESSL log book. The user is responsible for recording information in the ESSL log binder for each experiment session. ESSL staff may provide assistance.

15. Data. ESSL users are responsible for collection and safeguarding of research data. Files containing data that are left on ESSL computers will be deleted as part of normal lab maintenance. The ESSL user owns the research data on decisions generated from her experiment. ESSL maintains separate accounting records (without decision data).

16. Facilities. ESSL users must not damage lab equipment and must ensure that subjects do not damage lab equipment. ESSL users must ensure that subjects do not bring food or drink into the lab. ESSL users must also clean up the lab after use (discard trash, straighten chairs, log off computers, etc.).

17. Liability. Neither ESSL nor the University of California, Irvine makes any guarantee regarding hardware, programs, documentation or other materials available or used in the experimental laboratory. Neither ESSL nor the University of California, Irvine are responsible for any loss of data or money due to faulty programs or equipment.

18. <u>Acknowledgements.</u> Please acknowledge that you used ESSL at UCI in any publication that uses data obtained from ESSL.

19. <u>Lab fees.</u> The ESSL is currently accessible to users free of charge, but the ESSL Director reserves the right to charge lab fees in the future.